Mistress of the Situation.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "BY THE WAY OF THE VALLEY," ETC.

"'I saw Mary Ray touch him quite familiarly on the arm.'" *p.* 35.

CHAPTER V.

A TWILIGHT RAMBLE.

MARY RAY did not die, but she was dangerously ill for some weeks, and I nursed her. Edith suggested having her removed to a hospital, but father did not urge it, and Keith and I would not hear of such a thing, of course.

Our love for one another grew apace during that painful yet pleasant time. No invalid could possibly have been more patient or less troublesome than Mary; indeed, the only trouble she gave me was by her over-desire *not* to give trouble, and her constant anxiety lest I should get too tired. I was almost vexed sometimes by the idea that she must imagine me a poor, flimsy, floppy creature indeed, and scarcely fit for anything, and came to the conclusion that people who won't accept a reasonable amount of service from others are almost as trying, in their way, as the over-exacting, only they are not so common. I did wish that Mary could have realised it was quite as much pleasure to me to wait upon her as I'm sure it would have been to her, if occasion had demanded it, to do the same and more for me. It is not agreeable to have all one's natural instincts of self-devotion corked up and sat upon, so to speak, if a slight mixture of metaphor may be excused!—and while I am upon the subject, I herewith record my opinion that the good people in memoirs who wouldn't have a thing done for them in their last illnesses must have been a great source of annoyance to those about them!

However, Mary wasn't a book-heroine, and did not behave quite so badly as that. As I said, we grew fonder of each other day by day. We had plenty of confidentials, too, of a certain kind; that is to say, I found out that the mainspring of her life was, as I had guessed, a very real faith in, and love towards the one Lord of us all. She could not talk about it, at least in the stereotyped phrases of conventional piety, but it was in her heart, and she lived it, and it kept her calm and brave as she hung, as it were, by a single thread, over the chasm of death.

But she still said never a word about her relatives or her home, and as she was not delirious for a single hour, she did not betray anything by inadvertence. How I longed to ask her the meaning of that first name she uttered after her swoon! But her finger on my lips

could not have sealed them more effectually than did her own persistent silence, and I felt that a syllable upon the subject would have choked me.

Mrs. Jonesmith came to see her twice, and sent flowers and fruit, with kind messages, several times. But no other friends either directly or indirectly appeared upon the scene, nor were there any inquiries from Mary's relations. Once I asked her if there was anybody she would like me to write to, and she thanked me and said, "No, Mrs. Jonesmith had kindly undertaken all that." I must say I did wish she would not be so dreadfully reserved, it was the only thing about her that I did not wholly like.

Long before she was, in my opinion, sufficiently strong, Mary insisted on resuming her usual duties. We had sundry passages-at-arms over it, but these, of course, always ended in the subsidence of poor me. Then I was paltry enough to have recourse to that last resource of weak minds, cunning, and tried to do her out of some of her work by forestalling her and doing it myself. This nearly resulted in a quarrel, Mary holding forth with great dignity on the subject of undertaking work and being paid for it, and the excessive meanness of failing to perform the same as long as one has a leg to stand on or a gasp of breath left in one's body—very excellent sentiments in their way, of course, and certainly none too common among the employed of any grade.

It was about this time—that is, the period of Mary's convalescence—that my sister and brother and I, accompanied by Mr. Moore, formed the habit of taking frequent walks in the pleasant spring evenings, out into a countrified suburb, not too far from where we lived. On these occasions we always paired off in the same order, and I became the recipient of certain of Keith's confidences respecting Mary; he felt he could speak to me, he said, because I was so fond of her too.

"She's the one, the only one, for me, Sissie," he declared on one occasion. "I daren't speak to her in my present position, and heaven knows how many years I may have to wait. But I'd give the world to know if there's any possible chance of her being willing, if she had any suspicion of how I felt, to wait for me. We're both quite young," he added, wistfully.

I felt so sorry for him! I knew of the thousand-and-one delicate little attentions he had thought of during Mary's illness, and of which he had modestly made me the medium; but she had never betrayed any inkling of their true source. And then there was that other perplexity of which I could not tell him!

"I have sometimes wondered," I began, feeling that I must relieve my mind to some extent, "whether—that is, of course, before Edric became quite so marked in his preference for Edith!—whether he might not have been rather—rather struck by Mary's uncommon appearance, and—and whether she might have noticed it at all!"

Keith paused in his walk—the others were some distance ahead, and out of hearing—and faced me with drawn brows and darkening eyes.

"I never thought of that, Sissie," he said in a constrained sort of voice. "Do you really think it possible?"

"She has never confided the least word to me," I hastened to assure him. "And, of course, no one can mistake what Edric's intentions are now—at least, I hope not!"

"I remember," said Keith, slowly, "that he was very constant in his inquiries about her during that week when she was really in danger, and afterwards he frequently asked me how she was, and seemed to take a great deal of interest in her. But I thought nothing of that at the time; everybody who heard about it was interested—hers was such an act of heroism. Yet, now you come to speak of it, I must admit that he did show a good deal of anxiety—more, perhaps, than circumstances would seem to justify. Still, she knew nothing about that!"

"And everybody must notice his attention to Edith!"

"Moore's sense of honour is very great," said my brother. "And he had obviously begun making up to Edith before he ever saw Mary." Then, after a pause, "Do you believe in love at first sight, Sissie?"

"I hardly know," I answered.

"Well, I do! I have loved Mary from the first hour my eyes rested upon her," Keith confessed, with ardour. "Suppose it was the same with *him*, Sis, and her, too!"

The idea of such a wholesale epidemic of sudden attachments struck my fancy-free mind as slightly ludicrous, but Keith's eyes looked so tragic as they sought mine in yearning for contradiction, that my sense of humour was quenched on the spot.

"Oh dear, I hope not!" I exclaimed. "It would be too dreadful!" Then, as the possibilities involved in such a state of affairs loomed up one after another before me—Edith married to a man who wooed her only from a "sense of honour," the lives of my precious brother and my dearest friend both blighted hopelessly—I added, impulsively, "Keith, we must pray about this!"

"I do pray," he answered. "I have prayed night and day for weeks. But I see no light. I can't speak, I dare not speak, on seventy pounds a year! But it sometimes seems very hard, Sissie."

"I think the light must come if we both pray earnestly, and try to do what is right," I said, slowly. It was difficult to talk about these things even to Keith. We were not a family to freely indulge in religious conversation, though I believe that each of us, in our several modes, had heart communion with God. "Things will never be allowed to go all wrong and wretchedly, if we pray and trust."

Leisurely as we walked we were gaining upon Edith and Edric at every step, for they were sauntering more slowly still, and did not seem aware of our approach.

I coughed, and remarked aloud to Keith on the beautiful sculpturings of a birch-trunk to our right. The pair ahead of us started, and parted—they had been walking unusually close together before, Mr. Moore's head bent until his beard must have brushed the bow in Edith's bonnet—and turned to meet us. Both looked rather flushed, and half-smiling, and very self-conscious.

"A-hem, the days are drawing in early now," observed Mr. Moore, glancing at the already star-lit sky. It was the middle of March, and a particularly fine evening.

Edith's left hand was bare, a very rare thing for her. She was pulling on her glove with nervous haste, but I caught the glitter of gems on her third finger before she succeeded in covering it up.

CHAPTER VI.

A CRISIS AND A CATASTROPHE.

EDITH never mentioned her engagement openly to any of us, though she seemed well enough pleased to find that we all knew about it, and approved.

She was very happy, anyone could see that—it was in her eyes and her smile and her voice. A certain sharpness and touchiness which had rather spoiled her heretofore, seemed almost softened away; the very contour of her cheek and chin grew rounder; her mouth, which had at one time seemed in danger of hardening into haughty lines, began to curve quite sweetly, and the suspicion of a dimple that I had never noticed before took to peeping in the left-hand corner. I was so glad that this beautifying element had come into her life before the other expression became settled. I never realised before how much one's inner feelings and habitual frame of mind have to do with one's good looks. I suppose that is why it has been said that no woman need be ugly.

But this notable improvement in my always pretty sister, only made the more striking the retrogressive change that a single day wrought. She came home one afternoon—it was the thirtieth of March, I shall always remember that date for more reasons than one—looking so hard and angry that I was positively shocked.

"Oh, Edith, what is the matter?" I involuntarily exclaimed. "How cross you look!"

For a few minutes she made me no reply, but, untying her hat-strings with a jerk that set every flower quivering, she busied herself with straightening out the leaves and bows with such nervous exactitude that she made the whole thing look as if it had just had an electric shock.

"When will Miss Ray's salary be due?" she abruptly asked.

"Next Tuesday," I replied, with my heart leaping suddenly into my mouth. "Don't you know she came on the second of December?"

"Next Tuesday, then, she takes a month's notice—I'd give her a month's salary to be gone at once if I had it. If you object to telling her, *I* will."

"But—but—" I gasped, in bewilderment. "What has happened? Mary cannot have done anything to vex you. You have not seen her all day."

"I have seen her since I left home this morning," Edith replied. A bright spot was burning redder and redder upon either cheek. After a minute or two of silence, while I waited, expecting to hear more, she added, with apparent irrelevance, "There's nothing I abhor so much as deceit!"

"Mary is not deceitful!" I exclaimed.

"So you think, you poor, deluded creature!" returned Edith. "But I've not been mistaken in her from the first. More detestable double-dealing I never heard of—nor a more shameless want of all womanly modesty."

"Do, pray, explain yourself!" I said. "I am quite sure that you are making a great mistake somewhere."

"Am I? Did or did not our—ahem!—*lady*-help go out early this morning, very soon after me?"

"Yes, she did," I admitted. "We were going to have knuckle of veal for dinner, and it was doubtful whether the butcher would send it in time."

"I called in at Doddridge's on my way to the tram-car," said Edith, with the quietness and deliberation which in her is a sign of great anger, "to change those gloves I bought yesterday. It is a corner shop, as you know, and commands a good view up the road. As I stood there, I saw Edric coming along on the opposite side of the way, expecting no doubt to see me, for we often meet in the morning when I am early enough. Imagine my surprise to see a woman—Mary Ray—rush across as though she had been lying in wait for him, and coming up behind him, touch him quite familiarly on the arm! Just fancy the disgusting forwardness of her! He stopped and turned, looking amazed, as well he might, but being a gentleman he could not well do otherwise than listen to what she said—I'd have given something to know what it was! And then she had the effrontery to detain him for nearly five minutes. It must have been as long as that, for it was all the time the shop-man was finding the sort of gloves I wanted, which took him some time. I hardly knew how to restrain myself from darting out upon them. Little my lady guessed that she was being watched!"

"She must have had some reason for speaking to him," I said, as soon as Edith would let me say a word. Her revelation was certainly rather surprising, but Mary's integrity I *would not* doubt. "We shall find, if we ask her, that she will be able to give some perfectly satisfactory explanation."

"Ask *her!*" repeated Edith, scornfully. "Yes, she would no doubt be equal to satisfying *you* as to her transparent innocence and candour, but I have not been going about with my eyes shut for the past three or four months. I have noticed many things that I have not chosen to speak to you about, knowing your insane infatuation for the girl. But her unblushing attempts to attract Edric's attention have often made my blood fairly boil. I shall ask *him* about it certainly—I have a right to, now; but I shall not utter one word to her, until I give her notice to leave."

Here was a state of affairs! What to say or do in the matter, I could not imagine. Mary presently brought in our tea, and her eyes frankly and cloudlessly met mine. She raised her brows slightly, I suppose in answer to the unconscious appeal in my glance, but did not speak. I merely said, "Thank you, Mary," in as good an imitation of my usual voice as I could command; but something seemed choking me. Edith stared stonily out of the window meanwhile.

It was a wretched meal. If the tea and toast had been warm water and sawdust, I should have relished it as much. We even forgot to wait, as had been our custom lately, for father, and he was already three-quarters of an hour behind his usual time before either of us noticed it.

"Half-past six!" I suddenly exclaimed. "What can have detained him? I have not known him as late as this before."

Edith glanced at the clock. "He has had to wait for an inside place in the omnibus, perhaps," she said. "The wind is too cold to-day for him to go on the top."

But her tone was weary and half-indifferent. I knew that her mind was absorbed in thinking of the episode the import of which had been growing upon her with tormenting power all day. She was probably forecasting her interview with her lover, and planning how she

should word her question concerning Mary Ray—words destined never to be uttered.

Seven o'clock came—still no father. I grew quite feverish with anxiety, for father was an old man, over seventy years of age, and one never knows what may happen in such cases.

Half-past seven brought Keith, radiant, poor dear boy, with an unexpected increase in his salary. I could well imagine how he had been delighting himself all the way home with the thought that this brought him a little nearer to the time when he might honourably reveal his cherished secret to the girl we both loved—little dreaming what complications had that day arisen.

When we told him our uneasiness about father, he became as grave as we. We were just beginning to discuss what would be the best and wisest thing to do under the circumstances, when Edith, who was at the window, exclaimed, "Here's Edric! and oh, father is with him. But what can be the matter?"

She rushed to the door, and we followed.

Father, with a bandage over his eyes, came slowly up the steps, guided by Edric, and *he* was ashy pale and looked horribly ill.

"What is it? What has happened?" we cried.

"We have been in an accident," said father. "But thank God, I trust that neither of us is seriously injured."

"The omnibus overturned—axle snapped, or something," added Edric. "It was a marvellously narrow escape. We were coming back, as we usually do, together."

His voice was full of suppressed pain, and he sank into the nearest chair.

"But you are hurt, father! What is the matter with your head?" said I.

"It is my eyes—the splintered glass," he answered, unwillingly. "But I've had them seen to. I trust they will soon be all right."

"We have had a very narrow escape," said Edric, again. "We might have been killed. I fear one poor fellow will never see daylight any more."

"You are *sure* you are not hurt?" questioned Edith, anxiously.

"Only shaken a bit, and—and——"

I looked round quickly. He had fainted.

(*To be continued.*)

BRINGING UP.

"NO device has ever been invented that will take the place of being brought up."

So pithily said one of our prominent divines in a recent sermon. And the saying is worthy to be framed and hung up where every day it may come under the eye of the mother. Bringing up is a matter of day by day, week by week, year by year. It is a matter of social and moral atmosphere; it is a matter of example far more than of precept. Right habits must be formed, vicious tendencies checked, high principles implanted, noble impulses fostered, healthy appetites gratified and encouraged. Who is sufficient for these things?

We do not expect a fountain to rise higher than its source, and ought we to expect children to surpass their parents in essential nobility and worth? They may, in consequence of greater advantages than their parents enjoyed, surpass their parents in some things; but they will be terribly handicapped in their efforts to move along the lines that reach forward and upward, unless an example of right principle and integrity of character has been set before them in their early years.

The mother who would bring up her child aright must begin with herself; must be, so far as it is in her power, what she wants her child to be; must so lay the lines along which she wishes her child to move, and adjust the grades he is to climb, that the tender feet may easily advance along the chosen way, holding the parental hand, cheered by the parental voice, strengthened by the parental example and companionship. Those parents who make companions of their children, who enter into their sports, their enthusiasms, their ambitions, their hopes, their enterprises, are most successful in giving their children a good bringing up.

May we not congratulate mothers of the middle classes that they are compelled to bring up their own children instead of trusting them to the tender mercies of a hired nurse? A lady who spends a part of every fine day in a public park says she can tell by the face of a child, before she glances at its attendant, whether the latter is its mother or not. The mothered child has a serene and happy look wanting in the face of the nurse-attended child. In its tenderest and most plastic years it is moulded and formed by the unhired hand of maternal love and devotion.

"My mother has made life easy for me by the habits she formed in me in my childhood," said an old lady the other day. "She taught me never to put anything out of my hand without putting it in its place. She taught me that 'the right way is the best way and the easiest way.' She abhorred deceit, lying in every shape, company manners, dishonesty, debt, dirt, bad grammar, backbiting, idleness, extravagance, meddling. She loved knowledge, virtue, honour, integrity, honest toil, humanity, the church, the cause of Christ. Her ways were ways of peace."

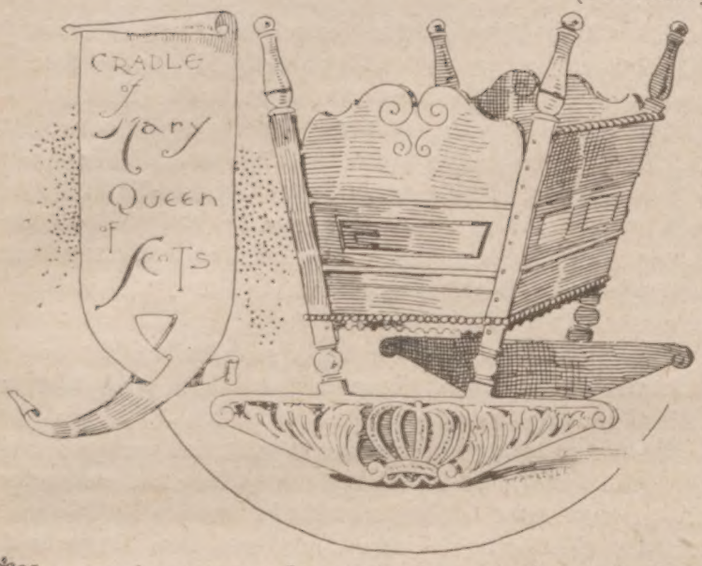
A good bringing up is a better investment for a child than any amount of money in the bank. The mother who can put no money in the bank, but who gives her children this priceless endowment, and sends them out into the world to make their own way, with no capital beyond a good bringing up, may rest assured that she has provided for them a dower far beyond the worth of gold and silver, and one which will stand them in better stead in many of the hardest of life's rough ways.

The Chinese are not given to excessive care of children. They like neither to be bothered, nor to lose them. So they put a "label" on each child, with his name and address on it. Then he is allowed to run where he will. If he is lost, whoever finds him brings him home. This is a regular custom of the people.

FAMOUS CRADLES OF LONG AGO.

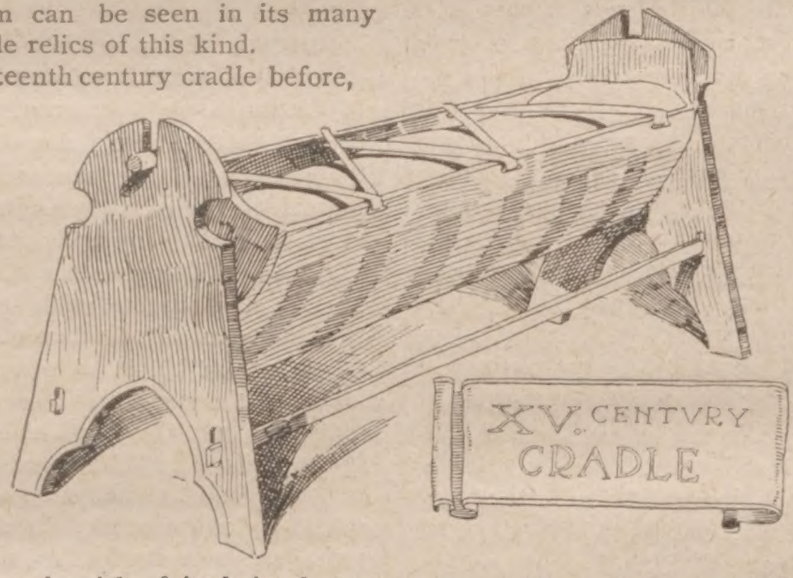
BY BEATRICE H. ARDEN.

(*Concluded from page 25.*)



IN a previous paper I promised my readers a further glance at some of the famous historic cradles that have come down to our day. I shall choose just three—not that this number exhausts the list; far from it. All over the kingdom can be seen in its many "stately homes" admirable relics of this kind.

I have spoken of the fifteenth century cradle before, but the illustration here is worth study, as it depicts a unique specimen of this period. We have records which tell that several centuries earlier it was customary to wrap up infants and let them lie on the floor amongst the rushes that served as a carpet. The practice was a dangerous one, for the hearths were open, and a mother laying her little treasure near the fire to keep it warm ran the risk of its being burnt, or scalded by the upsetting of the huge pot that was kept swung over the fire. An authentic case of the latter kind is chronicled, the thoughtless mother being compelled to do penance for the accidental death of her child. Another plan was to suspend a box between two posts, and the tiny charge was "rocked" to sleep by means of pushing the box to and fro. Then we have the improved kind seen in our picture. Here the body of the cradle is raised, and suspended by a short pole at each end, a stout framework keeping it secure. The "rocking" was done, not by the foot, but by hand—an arrangement in vogue in the best families, who could afford a nurse to perform only this task!

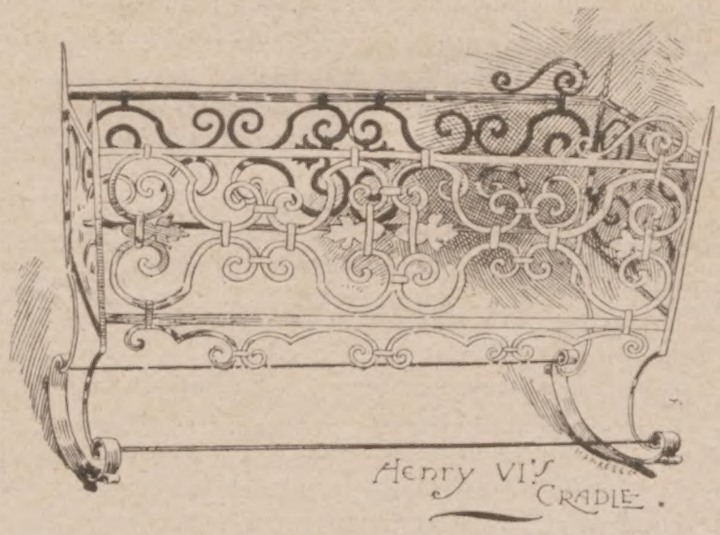


Quite different in material and style is the cradle or crib of Henry the Sixth. It is still to be seen at Oxford, in the Ashmolean Museum. A good specimen of ornamental ironwork it is, but with time much of its beauty has departed. Its career has been a chequered one, too, for it was rescued by an antiquarian from a number of domestic articles of later date. As it is, the head that once adorned it is missing, and the rich gilding has faded; while a former attendant further injured it by applying to it a coat of modern paint!

Much interest clings to this famous cradle, for its princely occupant lost his father when only nine months old, and in his eleventh year he was crowned king. In France he had the remarkable girl-soldier, Joan of Arc, to contend against his French claims; whilst at home he died as the last representative of the Red Rose of the house of Lancaster.

Equally interesting, if not more so, is the cradle of Mary Queen of Scots. A very simple affair it seems for a great notability, only the royal crown giving it a distinguishing mark. For long the existence of such a relic belonging to so renowned a female figure in English history was not generally known. But it was fortunately saved from a fire that broke out in Linlithgow Castle in January, 1746; in 1888 it was on view at the Glasgow Exhibition; and it is now in the possession of a gentleman at Edinburgh. It is curious that this cradle is very similar to the one used for Mary's great rival, Queen Elizabeth. In both articles there is the same solid oak, ever-enduring in wear, with sufficient sturdy carving to act as relief. The style of cradle at this time appears to be a counterpart of the stately four-post bedsteads that for so long held a proud position in English homes.

We have advanced much in the methods of furnishing in this nineteenth century, and yet the question will arise, as we close this brief study of an article familiar to every mother, Have we excelled in quaint beauty these cradles of the past? Certainly, the bassinette of to-day, with all its daintiness of material and drapery, will scarcely outlast these venerable examples.



A TALK ABOUT RICKETS.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., AUTHOR OF "SQUINTING AND ITS CURE," ETC.

ALTHOUGH this paper is intended for a winter month, I am writing it in my own garden on a lovely autumn morning, shortly after a tour, by road, of over a thousand miles through the most beautiful and less frequented districts of England. When jogging quietly along in one's own carriage, one notices much that cannot be seen from the windows of a railway car. The medical mind, too, is ever observant; a physician is trained to move about with both eyes and ears open.

I could not help, then, while on my tour, observing, firstly, how very common a complaint rickets is, and how dense is the prevailing ignorance of parents regarding it. Be it mine in this article to endeavour to dispel some of the latter, and to suggest modes of simple treatment for the prevention and cure of a disease which assuredly is not so trifling as it seems.

It is pleasant to be able to say that rickets, or that softening of the young bones which leads to bent arms and bandied legs, is not hereditary. Such, at all events, is the prevailing idea among medical men.

Again, as it is not a disease of birth, it is pretty evident that it can be prevented by care and judicious feeding afterwards. In many parts of England, especially in the manufacturing towns, it is no uncommon sight to see little girls—themselves not much more than babies—lugging about their rickety child-brothers in their arms. These wee nurses do not themselves look too well fed, but the mothers at home look worse—altogether feeble, perhaps, and broken down. But why are the girl-nurses straight in limb and bone? The answer is not far to seek. They are the elders of the family. They were born ere poverty began to pinch, while yet Hope to the parents told a flattering tale of long years of happiness to come, during which wages would be sufficient for wants and provisions never wax scarce.

Enfeebled health in the parents, then, brought on by hard work and worry, with insufficient sustenance, is one of the most frequent causes of rickets among the poor.

Does the trouble exist among those who have more of the world's wealth and less of its toil and moil? At times it does, and here, again, debility from other causes will usually account for its appearance.

Whatever weakens the mother—and too protracted suckling of offspring is a frequent fault and a dangerous one—will weaken the child and become a predisposing cause of the complaint under consideration.

Rickets is not a dangerous disease, mothers may say. No, but think of the disadvantages a young person who grows up bent-limbed has to labour under. Deformity is bad enough in a man, but it ruins all hopes of happiness in a woman.

No; rickets may not often cause death directly, but remember that a rickety child is a very weakly one, and when infantile troubles come, as come they always do, it is less able to struggle against them; it will have these in a severer form, and where a more robust child would soon get well, the former pines and dies.

Symptoms of Rickets.—These may be divided into the earlier and later, when the disease has well advanced. The former usually appear about the twelfth to eighteenth month. The little creature does not thrive. It "dwines," as they say up north. The food is not taken to kindly, and appears to do but little good. The child is peevish, and when not peevish, far too quiet and listless. Its pale and soft appearance, its irregular system, its restlessness by night, and the damp sweats that bedew it, all tell tales, and even at this stage medical assistance should be procured.

This latter, however, cannot always be had, for many reasons, else I would have no occasion, presently, to talk of the treatment.

Growing debility and lassitude will now come on, and the joints will become thickened, while the muscular energy decreases. Thighs and legs bend, the little one may become pigeon-breasted, and the head large and misshapely, the child being often a pitiable sight to see.

Of course, I may be said to be describing an extreme case, but as it cannot be told with certainty how far rickets may go, the sooner earlier symptoms are seen to, the better.

Sometimes in a weakly child the bending is only noticeable about the ankles or lower parts of the legs, and in these cases ignorant parents more often seek the advice of the shoemaker than the surgeon, just as if the disease could be stemmed by the wearing of the most artistically constructed splint-boots.

I come now to say a few words about the *treatment* of this most disagreeable malady. If taken in time, rickets is usually amenable to reason. It is really a blood disease. There is a deficiency of bone-making material in the blood. Now, as blood is made by food, diet is of the very first consequence. If the baby is being suckled, the mother's health must be seen to. She must have sufficient rest and relaxation; she must eat good, wholesome, well-cooked, nutritious food—milk, eggs, and tender, juicy meat. Alas! I know how seldom the poor can get the articles I am now prescribing, and I cannot help adding that I think a rich lady has no more happy mission on earth than that of looking after the wants of the deserving poor in her vicinity or parish. It is painful to think of the amount of good food that is wasted, not in the kitchens, but in the very ash-pits of what are called good families.

Well, if the child is of an age to be fed otherwise than with milk from the mother, meat and cow's milk—new and creamy—should be given in abundance, and beef-tea, frequently all day, because our object is to put good blood in the little thing.

As too few mothers know how to make good beef-tea, I here append a hint or two. Take lean beef, without a particle of fat, and mince it very fine. Then place it in a jar with a cover to it, or in a jelly-jar with an artificial paper cover. Put as much water in as will overflow the meat, and a pinch of salt. Now place the whole in a saucepan of hot water, and—mark me—it should simmer for *two* hours or more, *but not boil.*

Warm clothing should be worn out-doors and in by the child; he should be most carefully wrapped up when

in the perambulator, and sleep in a not over-warm, well-ventilated room; for fresh air in abundance, both indoors and out, is of the utmost importance.

Attention to these simple rules of hygiene, to which I should not forget to add perfect cleanliness and the bi-weekly warm bath, will alone work wonders. Sometimes the milk is apt to curdle much on the stomach, and be rejected in lumps. The remedy for this is to add three tablespoonfuls of lime-water—procurable at the chemist's—to each pint of milk. If the bowels are much disordered, an occasional grey powder will do good, or a powder of rhubarb and soda.

Another remedy of great value in disorderly bowels is syrup of senna, or simply castor oil.

Parrish's chemical food in doses suited to the age of the child should be administered daily as a tonic. Though called a food, it is a syrup, and a blood and bone maker. Nor must I forget to mention cod-liver oil, which is in reality a food, so that it can be given daily in conjunction with the tonic.

Splints may or may not be used; some recommend that while the child wears them bound to the legs it should be at perfect rest. This is my opinion, but they need not be worn more than an hour or two daily.

Let me repeat, then, some of the causes of rickets: Bad, or insufficient food; food unsuitable to the child's age; impure air; damp, unwholesome rooms; and last, but not least, too early marriages.

MOTHERS OF GREAT MEN.

THROUGHOUT the pages of history we are struck with the fact that our remarkable men possessed mothers of uncommon talents for good or bad, and great energy of character. It would almost seem, from this circumstance, that the impress of the mother is more frequently stamped on the boy, and that of the father upon the girl—we mean the mental and intellectual impress, as distinct from the physical ones.

It is said of Sir Walter Scott's mother that she was a small, plain, well-educated woman, of excellent sense, very charitable, and a great lover of poetry and painting, and on the whole a superior woman. It is evident, from the writings of Sir Walter, that he had an uncommon gift in word-painting.

It is affirmed of Byron's mother that she was a proud woman, hasty, violent, and unreasonable, with not principle enough to restrain her temper. Unhappily, Byron inherited his mother's inflammable temper; and, instead of being subdued and softened by the harshness with which she often treated him, he was rendered more passionate by it. Thus we see that this infirmity, which by gentleness and kind treatment might have been checked, if not cured, was suffered to enslave one of the most brilliant poetical minds which have ever shone among men.

The mother of Bonaparte was a woman of great beauty and energy of character. This last trait was strikingly exemplified throughout her son's whole life.

The mother of Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, was a woman of moderate personal attractions, but in every other respect she was a remarkable woman. She used to give wings to the weary hours of her chequered life by chanting songs or ballads, of which she had a large store.

Lord Bacon's mother is said to have been a woman of superior mind, of great learning, and deep piety.

Little is said of the mother of Nero, except that she murdered her second husband, the Emperor Claudius, about forty years after marriage. Do we wonder that Nero was a cruel emperor if his mother was a murderess? How strangely does the mother of Nero, an ancient tyrant, contrast with the mothers of some of our modern philanthropists and statesmen!—the mother of Washington, whose name is familiar to every reader of history; the mother of John Jay, who deserves a place by the side of Washington. Mrs. Jay is said to have had a cultivated mind, a fine imagination, and an affectionate temper.

The late John Randolph, some years before his death, wrote to a friend as follows: "I used to be called a Frenchman, because I took the French side in politics; and, though this was unjust, yet the truth is, I should have been a French atheist if it had not been for 'one recollection,' and that was when my departed mother used to take my little hands in hers, and cause me, on my knees, to say, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'"

Mothers will do well to remember that their impress is often indelibly stamped upon their sons.

A SUGGESTION.

THE Editor of *The Children's Friend* recently received from a lady a letter relating to a Needlework Competition in connection with his magazine. In the course of her letter the lady says:—

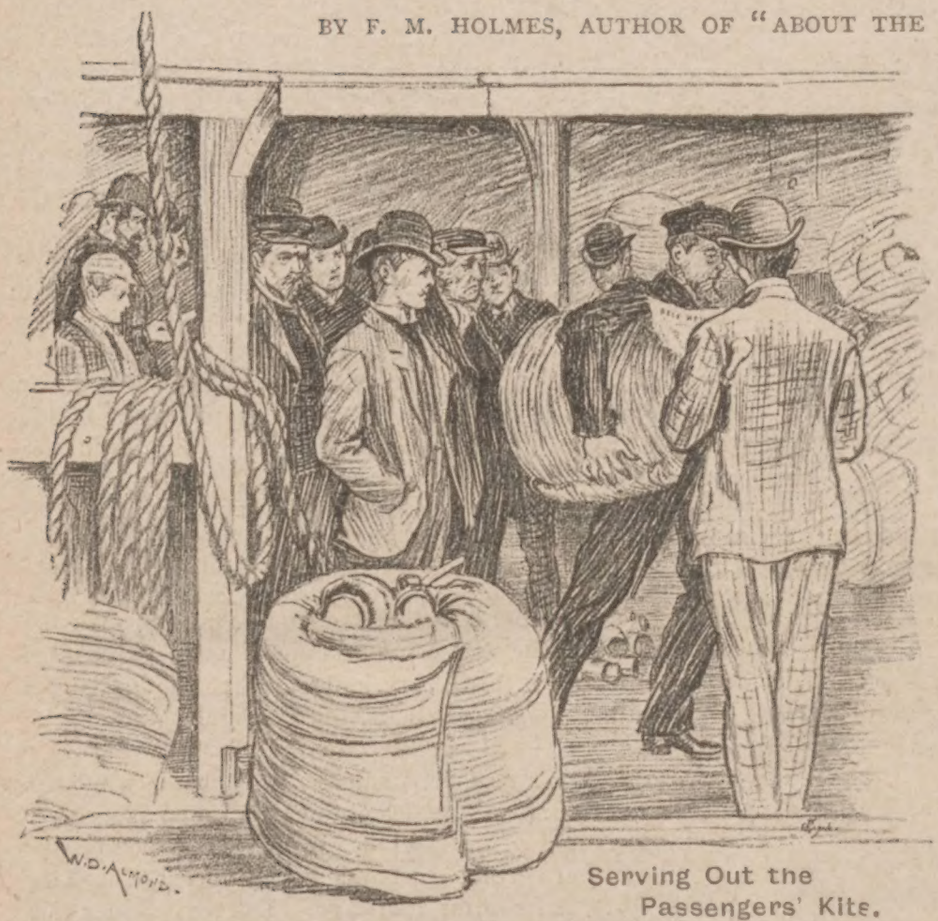
"I have often thought of writing to tell you how useful your little magazine has proved to us, so that you might let others know, and they might form a nucleus for good, as I hope we do in a small way. Several years ago you had a similar competition, and my children worked for it; but their work was late, so I sent it on to you, asking that it might be forwarded to a certain hospital.

"Then it came into my mind to start a working party for children, to work for children in the hospital. Ever since that time we have had a weekly working party, other children in the neighbourhood meeting ours. They bring their own work, and I read to them for an hour or more once a week. At Christmas we send quite a big parcel of clothes to the hospital, which the superintendent tells me is most acceptable. It is a great pleasure to the little ones to work, and they look forward to these working parties with delight. Perhaps, if you could make this known, other mothers would start a children's working-party, and the hospitals would benefit thereby."

The Editor of THE MOTHERS' COMPANION very gladly publishes this suggestion, and hopes that readers of the magazine who have the time and opportunity for such work will follow so excellent an example.

OFF WITH AN EMIGRANT PARTY.

BY F. M. HOLMES, AUTHOR OF "ABOUT THE COASTGUARD," ETC.



Serving Out the Passengers' Kits.

"WELL, Captain, you have taken over a good many emigrants in your time, I should think?"

"Yes, a good many."

"And do you ever bring any back?"

"One or two occasionally; but when they come back they generally come by saloon."

There is the best side of the immense emigration movement described in a sentence. Men and women and children go out from the British Islands to found new homes over the sea; they prosper in the new country, and, having made money, they ruffle it gaily in the ship's saloon on their way back to the old land. And of those who do not prosper so well we hear little, for they remain in their new home.

The captain belonged to the Beaver Line, a fleet of vessels largely engaged in the emigration traffic between the British Isles and Canada. There are also the Allan Line and the Dominion, both plying across the North Atlantic to Canadian ports.

Euston Station, of course, sees a goodly proportion of this traffic from London, and one of *the* scenes at the well-known terminus is the departure of emigrants during the spring and summer months of the year.

It is generally a quiet party, unless it has many children. There is subdued chat with friends in the dim light, for the start is late at night, and the party is English to the core, for its members are very undemonstrative. No tears are shed—for the public to notice—and except for some sad looks it might be an ordinary party not going outside the bounds of our tight little island.

Each person secures, if he can, a corner of the comfortable North-Western carriage, and then the train rushes onward through the night, until the pearly grey of dawn dims the garish gaslights; and when we draw up at Lime Street, Liverpool, it is in the full light of the new day.

There is time for breakfast and refreshing ablutions, and then a branch line takes the party down to the docks—those famous miles of Liverpool docks, the home of the celebrated Atlantic greyhounds, and many another noble ship besides.

"There she is; she is flying the Blue Peter"—the sign that she is about to sail—says Mr. Knowingone, a representative of the ship-owners, and he glances at the tall masts o'ertopping the roofs of the high sheds on the quays. "She'll be off in a couple of hours," he adds, though when we get down to the fine steamer such a scene of confusion presents itself that we wonder how she can ever get away in the time. But ships' officers have a wonderful knack of straightening out the tangled confusion into a clear line.

And now come the kits—not domestic cats to catch mice on the voyage, but the bedding, and the knife and fork and spoon, plate and cup, which the emigrants will want on the vessel. It is a curious thing, perhaps owing to the cheapness of the passage, that steerage

"Passing" the Doctor.

travellers are not provided with these necessaries by the steamship companies; they have to hire them (as on the Allan line), or purchase them (as on the Beaver and Dominion lines), or they can bring such things with them. Even the Warren line to Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, which only carries steerage passengers, does not provide the kits for the passage money. The charge, however, is cheap enough—three-and-sixpence for a mattress (like the proverbial live lion—stuffed with straw!), pillow, plate, mug, knife, fork, and spoon, which then become the property of the passenger.

Having procured their kits, the emigrants pass over the gangway on board the ship, in hopes of securing

"Board of Trade inspection," says someone; and we see the ship's crew marshalling all the passengers on the quay. Then, one by one, they step on board along the gangway, the medical officer of the Board of Trade and the ship's doctor standing at the end, and noticing each one as he or she passes.

The inspection is to prevent any infectious disease being brought on board, and kindly as the medical officer appears, and kindly as he is, he is sharp as a hawk, and as swift to pounce upon the infected one.

For the minute he is king, and the ship's officers do his bidding. A movement of his finger, or a word of his voice, and the would-be passenger has to stand aside.

A Spring Departure of Emigrants from Euston Station.

comfortable berths—often a vexed matter on shipboard. For instance, here is a good woman on the rampage! She has been shown her quarters—hers and her children's—in the boarded-up spaces sacred to women and children, and she does not like them. They will kill her, she asserts—her and her children, who flock around and gaze about with much interest. But the purser is an astute man, the very incarnation of cheeriness, patience, resourceful tact, and determination.

"Oh, you'll soon get used to it," says he. And before long we find that she has got used to it. How he soothed her we cannot say, but he seems to have done it it most effectually.

But what is this? All steerage passengers are going ashore!

It is a woman with a baby this time, and she is excessively voluble in her assertions; but the lynx-eyed doctor has detected signs of measles, and back the poor mother must stand.

Afterwards he and the ship's doctor examine the child more minutely, and the end is that she and her babe cannot come aboard. A terrible thing it would be to infect this floating town of near upon a thousand souls with any disease on the broad Atlantic, and she and her infant must go to the infirmary or to friends.

In the saloon are some of the vessel's officers and representatives of the owners signing mysterious papers and clearing the ship. The gangway is pulled ashore, and the opening in the bulwarks battened up. Then, almost before we know it, the huge ship begins to move.

Tugs are fore and aft, friends on shore wave their handkerchiefs, and the voyage has begun.

Presently the emigrants begin to settle down a little in their strange surroundings. Many are sad, and inclined to be dull and dispirited. Soon sea-sickness begins its torturing work, and compulsory retirement is the order of the day. By-and-by comes bed-time, and by degrees the passengers scramble into their broad shelves and adapt themselves to their new mode of sleeping.

Slowly the night passes, but it does pass, and then comes breakfast and Queenstown. If the morning be Sunday, emigrants find themselves face to face with a substantial meal of porridge, fish, bread and butter, and coffee; another morning they may have Irish stew instead of the porridge and fish; and some days porridge and bread-and-butter alone.

Now energetic and cheerful ones may find plenty to do in encouraging the others, and no doubt the concerts and entertainments are kept up every night, while sewing and chit-chat may be engaged in during the day. And on Sunday services are held.

As the days pass some enterprising persons look out for icebergs, the gambols of whales, or the play of porpoises; and at last a stately white cathedral of ice bears down upon us. But our emigrant ship does not shiver a berg this time, and at last Belleisle Straits are passed; we are fairly in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, and soon floating on the broad bosom of that noble stream.

Seven hundred miles to Montreal. Seven hundred miles of smooth water amid beautiful surroundings, after the heaving sea. Excitement grows; the monotony of the voyage is over. Within a short time now we shall land on new shores, and our progress is so tranquil that we can enjoy the beauties of the great river.

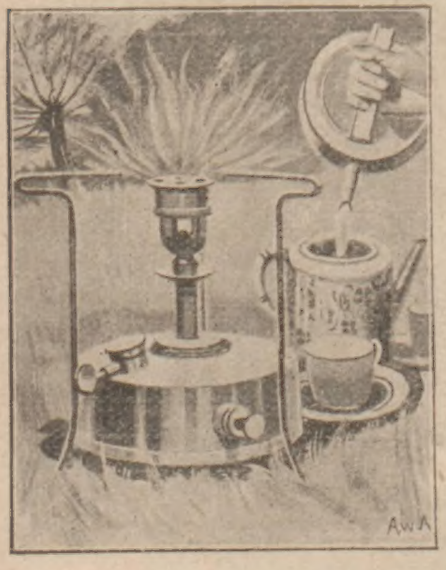
"See, there's the old Union Jack!" cries a passenger a day or so later; "it flies here as well as at home."

"Bravo! bravo!" shouts another, and as in duty bound they all salute the grand old flag. Somehow we can fancy our emigrant friends like to see the Union Jack. It is very homelike to behold it blowing bravely over here; while cheerier still it is to see smiling friends on shore ready to welcome them to this great part of the British empire.

NOVEL NOTIONS.

A NOVEL OIL STOVE.

THE Swedish stove which we illustrate herewith burns the gas from petroleum oil contained in the reservoir below, and requires no wick. Once lighted the burner vapourises the oil, and there is neither smoke, smell, nor disagreeable heat. The stove is inexplosible, and will be found useful both in summer and winter for cooking and boiling purposes. It is stated to boil a quart of water in three or four minutes, and cook a rump steak in five minutes. When the flame is at its maximum the consumption of oil is one-third of a pint per hour.



A SANITARY SINK STRAINER,

which has just been patented, deserves the attention of housewives. It consists of a galvanised cage, which may be readily fixed over the grating of a waste pipe, and, retaining all refuse, allows dirty water to run away freely, and so avoids stopped drains.

A NEW COAL VASE.

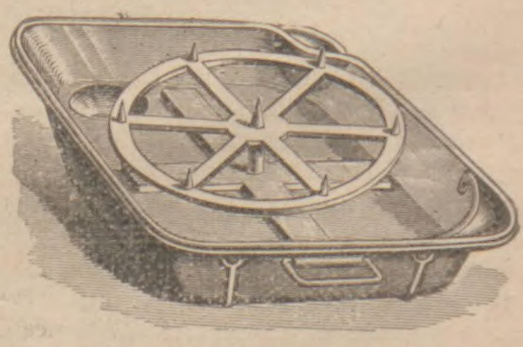
At a time of year when the question of fires is urgent, an improvement in coal-vases should meet with general approval. A new vase patented by Mr. Stroud has certainly a good deal to commend it, in that the lining is fitted with two small rollers at the back, which work on the bottom of the inside of the coal vase, and so make the removal or replacing of the lining a very simple matter. No one who has not seen this improvement in operation would believe how great are its advantages.

A BABY FASTENER.

A patent which will appeal specially to mothers has just been brought to our notice. It is a simple arrangement for securely holding the bedclothes on sleeping children, who, as mothers know only too well, have a special aptitude for kicking themselves free when in bed. One end of the fastener is attached to the bars at the head of the bed, and at the other end is a spring clip in which the bedclothes are gathered. These fasteners have the merit of keeping a child quite covered, and that without putting the slightest restraint upon its movements.

A REVOLVING GRID.

The simple device shown in our illustration obviates the need of removing a roast from the oven, and also the use of the fork in turning the meat. The grid is made in the form of a wheel of various sizes from 8 to 12 inches in diameter, suitable for pans of various dimensions. It rotates on a pivot, and the spikes on its upper surface hold the meat in position.



*** Readers wishing for further information about these Novel Notions are invited to write to the Editor at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., enclosing a stamped envelope for reply.

WOMEN OF WORTH.

A FAMOUS HYMN-WRITER.—MRS. ALEXANDER.

BY ISABEL S. ROBSON, AUTHOR OF "THE MOTHER OF GARFIELD," ETC.

IRELAND may justly be proud of a line of hymn-writers which dates as far back as the eleventh century, and in the band no name more worthily claims honour and veneration than that of the late Mrs. Alexander, in whose recent death at the advanced age of seventy-two, not Ireland only, but all English-speaking people have sustained a loss.

Born in 1823, the second daughter of Major John Humphreys, Cecil Frances Humphreys spent a happy girlhood among the romantic scenery of Tyrone, finding much, doubtless, in her picturesque surroundings to foster her poetic gifts. In 1850 she married the Rev. William Alexander, D.D., the present Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, himself a poet and the author of many books upon religious subjects. Miss Humphreys was eminently fitted to be the companion and helpmeet of such a man, and in her new home she devoted herself with ardour and discriminating sympathy to every detail of her husband's literary and pastoral labours, gladly acquiescing in his generous relinquishment of a large part of his income for the furtherance of charitable objects within his diocese.

Mrs. C. F. Alexander.

Not that her substantial help and interest were confined within those limits. In questions relating to education, temperance, and especially foreign missions, both the Bishop and his wife were deeply interested. The residence of a beloved daughter in South Africa naturally turned their warmest thoughts to the mission in that far-off land, and it was a beautiful loyalty to Mrs. Alexander's memory which prompted the canons and vestrymen of the Cathedral in Derry to send a generous contribution to the funds of this cause instead of placing an elaborate wreath on her grave. It was eminently the form in which she would have liked to find expression of her own grief for a loved one.

Seldom has a sweeter tribute been paid to a wife's memory than the touching dedication found in one of the Bishop's books: "To Cecil Frances Alexander, in remembrance of twenty-seven years of helpful love and holy example, with full assurance that his own estimate of her hymns and sacred songs is that of the Church of all English-speaking Christians, this attempt to interpret the highest of all sacred songs is dedicated by her husband."

It is, however, chiefly as a hymn-writer that Mrs. Alexander's memory will be cherished beyond the immediate circle touched by her personality. It has been said that she inaugurated the simple hymn for childhood which goes straight to the heart of the young. Hitherto, with a few notable exceptions, collections of hymns for children had been pedantic, or at least adapted only for the children of the educated. They had, also, largely inculcated a dark and severe religious teaching which we now see to be unsuited to tender little hearts and consciences and alien to the spirit of bright and healthy Christianity.

Mrs. Alexander wrote with winsome brightness and simplicity, combining the clearness of Dr. Watts with the comprehension of childish needs and aspirations of the Taylor sisters. Such hymns, for instance, as "Once in Royal David's city," "All things bright and beautiful," and "There is a green hill far away" are part of the moral as well as musical life of the children who have learnt them. Of the last-named, Gounod once said that no hymn he ever heard adapted itself so peculiarly to music, and to have heard it sung by some great singer was an unforgettable experience.

Mrs. Alexander's hymns number nearly four hundred, and fill many volumes, which early in the fifties began to appear annually, and ran in some cases into nearly a hundred editions. A few are complex and elaborate, but scarcely so happy as her simpler productions. Among them we find, however, the "Burial of Moses," one of the finest religious poems in our language, and concerning which the late Lord Tennyson said that "he would have felt proud to have seen his own signature below it."

Humble-minded as she was rarely-gifted, her literary success only pleased the poetess as a sign that her sphere of usefulness was ever widening. Her character was one in which the qualities of reserve and humility were strongly developed, and popularity had little attraction for her. Her sole aim, pursued untiringly, was to enunciate lofty morals in a form which should commend them to busy little minds and active little brains, and prove "nails in a sure place"

Seldom has it been given to any worker so beautifully to translate into fact an ideal embodied in her own words, a consecration of

> "Each treasure of the heart and brain,
> The burning thought and reason strong,
> The iron of an earnest mind,
> The golden pen, the silver song,
> Nor leave one glorious gift behind."

JOTTINGS FROM A NURSE'S NOTE-BOOK.

THERE are three great essentials in connection with a sick-room, viz., fresh air without draught, complete quiet, and absolute cleanliness.

It cannot be too often pointed out that fresh air is not only one of the most active stimulants of life, but is also one of the most powerful disinfectants. Of the first importance is ventilation; but on no account should the patient's temperature be lowered in providing this. No air in the sick-room can be either fresh or pure unless the room is scrupulously clean.

Complete quiet in a sick-room is a special necessity; everything that disturbs or excites should be avoided; therefore, let no one in a sick-room wear creaking or heavy shoes or rustling dresses—in sickness the senses are often most acute, and noises are painfully felt. Fire-irons should be used with much caution—a stick for stirring the fire is preferable to a poker, and a basket for the coals is better than a scuttle, as it prevents the rattling noise, which is apt to be very irritating to the patient.

Avoid the use of linen sheets—they have a natural tendency to create a chill, which in any illness is dangerous, and in some cases fatal; cotton sheets are better than linen, and blankets better than either.

Pure water that has been boiled and is slightly tepid is the best drink for sick people. When thirst is excessive, it should be given in small quantities, and frequently. To the water nothing should be added, except under direct medical instructions. The reason for this is that pure water gives nature fair play in her struggle with disease.

Do not allow any food or drink to remain in the sick-room, except when positively necessary; both will become rapidly tainted by the atmosphere.

In cases of infectious diseases, all food not eaten should be removed and burned.

Never enter a sick-room in a state of perspiration; the minute a person becomes cold the pores absorb. In cases of infectious disease, it is advisable to avoid nursing on an empty stomach. Avoid as much as possible coming between the patient and the fire-place, as the impure vapours are drawn towards the fire, and pass up the chimney.

The hands should be carefully washed in water containing disinfectant after moving the sick person. The reason for this precaution is that the exhalations thrown off the body in such cases are poisonous, and carry the contagion either by the air or the hand.

In all cases it is advisable to place under the bed a large dish or flat bath containing disinfectant, which absorbs the miasma; and this should be removed at convenient intervals—once a day, if possible—and replenished.

Do not awaken a sick person for any reason whatever; on the contrary, encourage sleep by every fair means. Quiet sleep is almost an infallible sign of returning health; and it should be remembered that fitful sleep is very often the precursor of healthy sleep. The repeated offer of "making the bed comfortable" is often a great annoyance. The sick person may be lying in an attitude apparently the most uncomfortable, and yet experiencing great relief; and to disturb a patient may be to awaken him from what might be a long refreshing sleep. Suitable opportunity should be taken to shake a pillow, straighten the bedclothes, and perform any little office of this nature.

The room should not be overheated, nor allowed to become too cold. A steady, moderate temperature is the best.

Light, too, should be duly considered. Never let a lamp or candle be placed facing an invalid; the glare should be hidden by the bed-curtains, or otherwise shaded, so that the light may not distress the eyes.

Do not trouble because a sick person does not wish to eat. In cases of acute disease a patient is better without food for a day or two. When nourishment is absolutely needed, it should be given sparingly and frequently.

It must always be remembered that no one is so fastidious as a sick person. All bottles, dishes, and other utensils that have served their purpose should be immediately removed; the cup, glass or plate handed to him should be clean and clear, and accompanied by a dainty cloth or napkin; a dull, smeared glass or plate makes medicine more distasteful and food less palatable. It is in the highest degree essential that the appointments should be the very best obtainable under the circumstances; everything should be—outwardly at least—as tempting as possible.

Helps for Busy Housewives.

FISH PUDDING.—Pull the remains of any white fish, add a little bacon, pepper, salt, chopped onion, and parsley. Fill a pie-dish nearly full, and moisten with stock. Mash some potatoes with milk, a little butter, and one egg, adding some chopped capers, olives, and gherkins. Make a crust about an inch thick over the fish, and bake in a moderate oven.

Many Diseases are due to the accumulation of waste or impure matter in the system, which a person is not strong enough to get rid of through the skin, lungs, or other excretory organs; hence the importance of thorough cleanliness and temperance in diet. Take daily exercise in the open air, and in warm weather sit in the open air in preference to a room.

Suet.—When chopping suet, sprinkle a little flour over it to prevent it from sticking to the knife.

Decayed Teeth are a frequent cause of indigestion, and should receive the prompt attention of a skilful dentist. Teeth need a proper examination after any serious attack of illness.

Malaria.—Should you be staying in a malarious district, be sure to do your walking in the middle of the day.

German Toast.—Take the remains of a cold fricassee or stew, mince it, retaining the gravy; to a pint of this add two eggs well beaten, a chopped onion, a little parsley, and any other seasoning you like. Stir the mixture over a fire till it is thick and one-third of it boiled away. Let it get cold. Then spread it on pieces of toast, brush it with beaten egg, sprinkle bread crumbs, and lay a small piece of butter on the top. Bake till it is thoroughly hot. Serve on a hot dish, garnished with slices of lemon and parsley.

SALLY'S SCHEME.

BY FLORENCE E. BURCH, AUTHOR OF "MRS. WARNER'S POLICY," ETC.

"IT WOULDN'T be the least bit of use, Bertha. Mamma doesn't see that kind of thing at all," and Sally gave a little sigh.

Her friend's life seemed so free and full—and *useful.* That was what Sally envied so.

Her own life could be *full* enough in a certain way. But there are some things that *choke* the life by filling it. Sally's life was being choked—or so she thought.

There are some contingencies so extremely improbable that persons like her are apt to run into the error of reading im*possible* for im*probable.* But error it remains, as Bertha took good care to point out.

"Give the suggestion a trial," added she. "It isn't fair to pronounce until you have."

And Sally being pliable, as most weak people are—small hope for them else—promised, and went home in the end enthusiastic of her determination to make the experiment at all hazards.

"Mrs. Graham put down the newspaper and prepared to listen." *p.* 46.

Bertha was silent a minute. She was very well aware of this difference between Mrs. Graham and her own mother, and it was a little difficult to know how to answer. But she was just as well aware of a certain weak point in Sally's character. Bertha herself was one of those people who are completely possessed by the audacity of strong purpose, and she knew Sally to be the very opposite. It was no random question, therefore, when she asked, "Had Sally ever suggested it?"

Brought face to face with the question, Sally was bound to confess that she had not. She had never thought it would be of the slightest use, she repeated.

Mrs. Graham, meanwhile, had been holding confidences with her friend, who was an inveterate district worker, and had brought her girls up to follow in her steps.

"*My* Sally doesn't take to that kind of thing," she had been saying. "I only wish she did. The life of a girl nowadays seems to me to be one ceaseless round of gaieties. It was so different when I was young.

We used to sit at home and do our needlework by hand, and think it ample recreation to take a walk as far as the almshouses to read to some poor old creature who could not see her Bible for herself."

Mrs. Rex was far too practical to regret the introduction of sewing-machines, on the plea that hand-work kept girls longer over making their garments. But Mrs. Graham seemed to regard anything a blessing which lessened leisure for frivolity or moping. "And really," added she, "Sally has been like a November day lately." As if sitting close at sewing would have changed that!

Sally, however, came in like a breath of spring, transformed by her new enthusiasm.

"Mamma," said she, advancing buoyantly towards the armchair where her mother was having a lazy time with the newspaper, "I've got a little scheme."

Mrs. Graham finished the paragraph she was reading, then put down the newspaper, and prepared to listen.

"Bertha," continued Sally, "is interesting herself in some poor girls who get their living by sewing. Awfully poor they are, mamma; and they work—oh! well, the wonder is they don't *kill* themselves outright. And the pay! so miserably low, it is; yet they always seem so grateful because there is work to keep them at it from morning to night in that way——"

"A thing to *be* grateful for," struck in the mother, "when so many girls cannot obtain work at all."

"Bertha thought," continued Sally, eagerly, "that perhaps we could have one of them here."

"When the spring dressmaking comes round we might be glad to, certainly," assented Mrs. Graham; "if Bertha can really recommend them. It would save a good deal to have some one in the house to sew."

"But"—Sally, in her eagerness, had expected her mother to understand her scheme without duly having unfolded it—"that wasn't exactly what I meant," said she. "Bertha wanted to give them a real holiday, just to have them in the house, and let them rest and read nice books, and get plenty of sleep and good food, and take them for walks (they get so little fresh air, you know!)—and—and—" (for Mrs. Graham's countenance was waxing discouragingly eloquent) "and treat them just like friends."

"And *what?*"

But Sally didn't feel that there was any need to repeat the clause. One effort she made, however.

"Bertha said," she began, timidly, "that we couldn't expect them to feel that Christ cares for them unless we show that His followers do."

But her mother only flung out some words about ridiculous ideas and Socialistic nonsense, and teaching idleness to the working classes, who ought always to work for what was given them; and, as soon as she could conveniently escape, Sally beat a retreat.

"Just fancy!" her mother said over a cup of tea in Mrs. Rex's drawing-room next afternoon. "I hardly think she'll bring another scheme to me."

"But have you never thought," remarked Mrs. Rex, after a pause, "that it is precisely our children's schemes that we *want* them to bring to us; and that we are doing far more for their growth, by helping them to carry out their own enthusiasms, than by narrowing them down within the limits of ours? This scheme of Bertha's is not so downright monstrous, either; and as for her 'little bit of preach,' as you call it, that is true enough, for

'God's possible is taught by His world's loving.'

Moreover, *I* am just now taken up by the same scheme; and to-morrow, about this time, a young widow whom I have found out, will be sitting where you are, and drinking tea with me. I only hope," she added, thoughtfully, "that I shall have the grace to make her feel *genuinely* at home."

Nothing more was said just then, for one of the girls came in; and soon after Mrs. Graham took leave. But she went away with her self-complacency disturbed.

"Growth"? "Enthusiasms"? "God's possible"?

Her highest ambitions had been "ease," "enjoyment," and *Society's* "possible." But her friend's words had struck home, and the leaven worked; and Sally realised her scheme.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

March 2nd, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Do not please think I love harping only on one string, but let me once more beg of you to enclose a stamped directed envelope with all questions that need an answer. "Delays are dangerous," as the copy-books used to tell us, and many a bit of advice may be rendered useless by coming a day too late. I hope my friends will remember this.

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"ELSIE" is very anxious to know the best way of preparing fruit for children. You should buy an earthenware jar with a lid, "ELSIE;" in fact, if you are wise, and can afford it, you will buy two. Keep one for stewing down bones, or for making beef tea, and the other for stewing fruit. Every bone which comes from the dinner plates, provided of course it has not been picked by anybody's teeth, should end its existence in one of those jars. In this way you will always have a little "stock" for the children's dinner. Fruit should be carefully looked over, then put in the jar with sugar and a little water. The lid should be put on and the jar placed in a moderate oven. Fruit thus prepared is wholesome and nice, with the exception, perhaps, of poor, old rhubarb, which needs such an amount of sugar to make it eatable that it is a very doubtful question whether it is a good article of food for children with delicate stomachs. If you want to give your husband and your children a special treat, "ELSIE," get a pint of milk, put in four lumps of sugar, stand it in a jug near the fire till it is just tepid, add to it then two teaspoonfuls of rennet, stir it well, pour it into a pie-dish or glass dish, and stand it in the larder. Grate a little nutmeg over the top when cold, and serve with the stewed fruit. By the by, milk thus prepared is half digested, and is a splendid diet for people who suffer from indigestion.

Our Puzzle Paragraph.

"Mary" has three boys getting well through their teens, and would like to know the best plan to keep them at home when work is done. Answers must reach me not later than the 15th of this month. A book, valued at half-a-crown, will be sent to the writer of the best solution, which will also be published in this column.

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"Clara" is much annoyed by her next-door neighbours. "They do their washing at home, and all sorts of garments are hanging all over the garden all day long on washing days." Well, "Clara," I sincerely sympathise, especially as you say you have to earn your own living by giving music lessons. I would suggest that you should write a polite note to your neighbour, and ask whether she could not conveniently manage to put the household arrangements out of sight by three o'clock in the afternoon. If the worst comes to the worst, you will have to cover the lower panes of your window as I suggested in my January letter. And in the summer—well, one of those reed blinds might answer the purpose.

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No, "Bella," I cannot agree with you. I think your sweetheart did well to be angry. That's a dear old-fashioned word to my mind, worth fifty of the modern "my young man." Many people see no more harm in dancing than in walking or riding, but you should remember that "circumstances alter cases." If a girl is engaged to one man and loves him with all her heart, as she certainly ought, I consider that it should be absolutely distasteful to her to have another fellow's arm round her waist, as in a waltz or polka. If her own feeling does not teach her this, she should most certainly have the good taste to give it up when her sweetheart requests her to do so. If you love dancing more than you love your "Fred," then I should suggest you give up the latter before you mar two lives.

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There you see, "Madge," is the answer to your question. It is, I think, right to break off the engagement (even at the risk of a breach of promise action) if your daughter is convinced she has made a mistake. You remember the old story of a rash promise. Sometimes I fancy we make too little of the latter part of that sentence, "Nevertheless, for the oath's sake." That was right enough, but I doubt whether Herod would have been so particular if it had not been also "and them that sat at meat with him." The dread of what people will say in 999 cases out of a 1000, prevents a woman (and a man too, for the matter of that) from breaking a rash promise. By all means, "Madge," teach your children to reverence a promise as you seem to have done, but teach them also to be very chary of making one. Having made it, let them remember that should they find that they have promised, not wisely, but too well, they must be brave and break that promise, if the keeping of it would entail disappointment and misery, and probably sin. "Whether is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifieth the gift?" Which is more important, the promise or the will of God, which should sanctify the promise?

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I am sorry for you, "M. A. Y.," especially as I am afraid I cannot help you very much. Eczema is a most irritating complaint, which arises from so many different causes that it is quite impossible to cure it by correspondence, unless one knows the patient. Eczema is sometimes the result of poorness of blood, sometimes it comes from injudicious feeding, and sometimes it is a form of gout. There are times also when it would be dangerous to drive in the eczema, as it is often a sort of safety valve. Under these circumstances, you see that I can only urge you to apply to a local medical man.

A little glycerine of borax may be applied to the ear, scalp, or forehead if the dryness of skin appears there, but on other parts of the body a little "black ointment," which can be obtained from any chemist, relieves the itching. But I feel I must repeat my caution — be careful in your diet, and apply to a local medical man.

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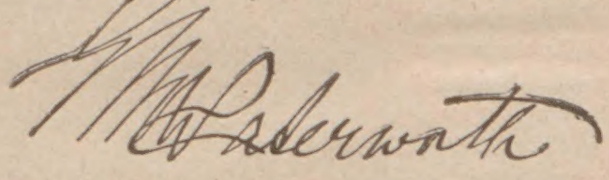
I wonder whether "Ellen" burst out laughing when she read my letter? I am glad if she did, for it is better to laugh than to cry any day. I wonder what there is about warts which makes them peculiarly amenable to ridiculous remedies? Of course, I consulted my doctor, as usual, when I received Ellen's letter asking for a remedy for warts, and sent her on his directions—viz., "Apply acetic acid with camel-hair brush, and if that does not answer use nitrate of silver or lunar caustic."

But being a woman, naturally I stick to my own opinion still, and sent directions of an old Norfolk cure: Break an apple, rub the wart with one of the pieces (juicy side, of course); get someone to bury the apple, and not let anyone know where it is. As the apple decays, so will the wart. Please remember, dear readers, I am speaking from my own experience, having successfully applied the "apple" remedy to a wart on my eldest boy's leg.

That "Ellen" may do the same is the earnest wish of



Cultivate Home Music.—Teach the little ones that kind words are the music of the earth; that they have a power which seems to be beyond natural causes, as if they were some angel's song which had lost its way, and come on earth.

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Not Afraid.—Once a week the children of a London mission school are requested to tell a story of something which has happened at home, and this is one: "Last night I had to get up to get Yetta a drink of water, and I saw the stars shining, and I sang 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star,' and I wasn't afraid, 'cause God was taking care of all the world, and He was looking at me; but I didn't see Him, and 'twas awful cold and dark." That child lived in one of the lowest and dirtiest quarters of the city.

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My Home was the poorest of the poor, and many a time I have been glad to shine boots for a penny. My mother taught me to read, and to know this truth—that labour does not degrade; it is the man who dignifies labour.—*Mark Knowles, Barrister.*

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Christ entered life as a babe, thus sanctifying infancy, childhood, motherhood, and home.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

THE brighter, longer days of this month make it necessary to renovate the garments which have stood us in such good stead through the darker days, or to replace them with new ones. If the latter plan be resorted to, it will be well to have a dress and jacket or cape made of the same material, which will be suitable for wearing on warmer, brighter days. Either jacket or cape should be lined, and an interlining of flannel or domette can be used if the fabric is a thin one. There are many materials in both plain and fancy patterns which will lend themselves well for a costume of this kind. The cape most used just now is of the circular order, cut very full, so as to hang in fluted pleats from the shoulders; wide revers are sometimes used in front, finishing in long scarf ends. The jacket for such a costume should be tight-fitting at the back, and cut a little shorter than those worn last season, the fronts being made so as to be worn either open or closed.

Fig. 8.

Spring hats are certainly less showy and are all placed low on the forehead, and bonnets are pressed down so deep that only a tiny band of the hair is to be seen. The colours chosen for trimming are less bright and staring than formerly; lace, chenille, and wide satin ribbon, together with pen and curled feather plumes, beads, and sequins, combine to give grace and beauty to fashionable headgear. Chasseur hats, turned up at the side, are still much admired and worn, while the toque and bonnet form find favour with the married folk.

Fig. 9.

Fig. 8. We show here a lady's dress made in tan-coloured stuff, with steel-blue ottoman silk. The bodice is made on a fitting lining, over which the material is gathered full in front, and laid on plain at the back. The silk is made to form a bag-shaped front, the material on either side being edged with lace or sequin trimming. The stand-up collar and waistband are made of folded satin ribbon. The sleeve consists of a large puff with a shorter one which is stiffened with tailor's linen. The bottom of the skirt is finished in points, which are somewhat difficult to arrange, but the same effect can be gained by using a fancy braid trimming, which will then be used on the body instead of the lace.

Fig. 10.

Fig. 9. We have here a short fitting jacket made in fine cloth suitable for spring wear. The edges are turned under and stitched, and the jacket fastens down the side with large mother-of-pearl buttons. Melon-shaped sleeves are not cut very wide, but shaped so as to fit into a cuff at the wrist. This cuff and also the turned-down collar are about two and a half inches wide, and are covered with velvet.

Fig. 10. This pattern will be suitable for a girl from eight to eleven years of age, and can be carried out in brown cheviot, with green or light-blue for trimmings. The bodice is arranged with jacket fronts, which meet a full plastron of the contrast stuff, while two collars are used to ornament the neck and shoulders; these must be lined with sateen, and also have an interlining of tailor's linen. Neckband, waistband, and sleeve cuff are all of the lighter coloured material. The skirt is lined throughout, and mounted on to the body, the edge of which is first turned under.

Fig. 11.

Fig. 11. This little coat will be found suitable for a child from seven to nine years of age. The back is made in the form of a pointed yoke, below which the cloth is set on in pleats, while the front is made to reach over to the left shoulder and button down the side. The waist is drawn in with a band, and a turned-down collar finishes the neck.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 8, 9, 10, and 11, 6½d. each, post free. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.